



## Portland delivers message on USPS' 242nd birthday

Ben Franklin (above right), the nation's first postmaster general, joined more than two dozen postal workers and customers at the Main Post Office in Northwest Portland July 26 to celebrate the 242nd birthday of the U.S. Postal Service. They also gathered to protest job cuts that are causing longer lines and delay of mail delivery. "We need a revolutionary postmaster general who will fight for the postal service, against the tyranny of the privatizers, against the oppression of the union busters," said Franklin, played by retired letter carrier David Medford. "We need revolutionary postal workers who will spread the alarm to every corner of this nation." USPS has eliminated dozens of jobs of retail and mail processing clerks in the Portland area this year, and dozens more are targeted as part of announced cuts that would reduce staffing by 12,000 nationwide. 'Franklin' called

for a postal service that will deliver on time, six days a week, door to door: "We need post offices that are open at night ... that provide banking services, one-stop government services, and internet access .... We the people have a constitutionally-mandated post office which we must defend for our children and our children's children." And while USPS has experienced a decline in letter mail, the Postal Service has emerged as the mainstay of parcel delivery, as consumers move their retail purchases to online providers. Postal supporters said USPS financial losses are due to a 2006 Congressional mandate to fund retiree benefits in advance. Union leaders say USPS has been breaking even or making a profit on operations for the last five years. The U.S. Postal Service was chartered by the Continental Congress on July 26, 1775 — also known as Postal Heritage Day.

## U.S. House votes down effort to weaken federal prevailing wage

SW Washington's Jamie Herrera Beutler votes to cut Davis-Bacon

The U.S. House of Representatives on July 13 voted down an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act that would have reduced prevailing wages on federally-funded construction projects. The amendment failed 183 no to 242 yes. Fifty-one Republicans joined all voting Democrats in voting no. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-Wash.), was the only member of Congress from Washington or Oregon to vote "yes" on the amendment.

Enacted in 1931, the Davis-Bacon Act requires that local prevailing wages, determined by the Labor Department, be paid to construction workers — union and nonunion — toiling on federally funded projects such as highways, bridges, airports and subway systems.

The amendment to weaken Davis-Bacon rules in the National Defense Authorization Act was made by Republican Paul Gosar of Arizona. It would have required that wage deter-

minations be made with statistically sampled information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics — instead of the current method, which is based on employer surveys.

Leading the debate against the amendment was Rep. David Norcross (D-N.J.), who is a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), a former Building Trades Council president in southern New Jersey, and co-chairman of the Congressional Building Trades Caucus.

"The prevailing wage is based on surveys of local wages and benefits, not whether there is a union or not," Norcross said. "This (amendment) is about cutting wages in your local community." He asked colleagues: "Why would you ever want to go back and say, 'I want to hurt the people I represent?'"

The bill itself, H.R. 2810 National Defense Authorization Act, passed the House July 14 by 344-81. The bill would authorize and prioritize funding totaling \$696 billion for the Department of Defense and military activities and construction. The bill now heads to the Senate.

## Nonunion concrete contractor gets prison sentence in wage fraud case

Jeffery Hurliman, owner of nonunion Westwind Concrete, is serving a two-month federal prison sentence for lying to federal investigators in connection with prevailing wage violations.

Westwind Concrete, based in Cloverdale, Oregon, was a subcontractor on a 2014 construction project at the Marquis Tualatin assisted living center. All construction workers on the project were supposed to be paid the federal prevailing wage because the project received loan guarantees from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). But a Department of Labor investigation of four HUD-funded projects founds violations at Marquis Tualatin. Carpenters, ironworkers, laborers, and cement masons were being paid less than they were legally entitled to. Investigators at the Labor Department Wage and Hour Division found that Westwind Concrete owed a total of \$93,000 in back wages to 27 workers.

Thomas Silva, director of the Portland office of the Labor Department's Wage and Hour Divi-

sion, says the project's general contractor, Prevailing Construction NW, LLC, notified all subcontractors of the discrepancy, and paid subcontractors the difference.

Hurliman turned in certifications that he claimed were from his employees attesting to having received the back wages. But officials in the division's Portland office noted discrepancies on the proofs of payment. The Labor Department's Office of Inspector General investigated, and found that the certifications were falsified and that when Hurliman learned about the investigation, he offered money to employees to lie to investigators. That led to federal criminal prosecution.

In January 2017, Hurliman pleaded guilty to witness tampering and providing false statements to the government, both felonies, and began his sentence on June 15, 2017. He will be on supervised release for three years following his release from prison on Aug. 15, 2017.

DOL is seeking to debar Westwind from future government contracts.

**PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
501 NDIXON ST, PORTLAND, OR 97227 • PHONE: 503.916.3399

## Join Our Team!



### Why work with PPS Nutrition Services?

- Work with kids and food
- Day shifts, no nights, regular work schedule
- No weekends or holidays
- Training provided

Call 503 916-3271 for more information.

Applicants must be fingerprinted, pass criminal record check and obtain Multnomah County Food Handlers Certification.

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*